

THE CITY OF GROTON

Mayor Marian Galbraith

295 Meridian Street, Groton, CT 06340

(860) 446-4103 (860) 445-4058 FAX

March 3, 2016

Testimony of Marian Galbraith, Mayor of the City of Groton, in support of Raised Bill No. 5480, **AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF LIENS RESULTING FROM UNPAID BLIGHT FINES, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LOAN FUND TO REMEDIATE BLIGHTED PROPERTIES, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK FORCE TO STUDY HOARDING AND THE MAINTENANCE OF PROPERTIES IN FORECLOSURE.**

On behalf of the City of Groton, I am pleased to write in support of Raised Bill No. 5480. The bill contains several provisions which would be of enormous assistance to municipalities dealing with blight all of which I support. However, I would like to address my remarks to two which are of particular concern to us.

Like many municipalities, the City of Groton struggles with blight and blight law enforcement. This difficulty is compounded when property owners are non-residents and no longer interested in maintaining the property. Quite often these non-resident property owners are content to have a lien placed on a property which they have allowed to become dilapidated, sometimes beyond the point of repair. The ability to place liens on any property within the state which is also owned by the owner of the blighted property is a tool which would greatly aid us in our efforts.

In addition, the deletion of the former Section 7 – 148ii(k), would be a real boon to municipalities like mine who struggle with properties which are in seeming endless limbo after notice of intent to foreclose. We have had several instances where the former property owner moves away after notice of intent to foreclose, leaving behind blighted property or a property which soon becomes blighted after abandonment. In these lis pendens cases, the foreclosing party often does not complete the action for months, or even years, yet they have been absolved of the responsibility to repair, maintain or secure the property. In the past, the City has borne the cost to board up houses which were insecure, turn off water services after frozen pipes burst, and deal with health issues caused by rodents.

I urge you to support passage of this bill in an effort to support municipalities like ours who are dealing with blight.

Sincerely,

Marian Galbraith

Mayor, City of Groton

*295 Meridian Street
Groton, CT 06340
Office: 860-446-4101
Fax: 860-445-4058*